SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION
BULLETIN

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HOUSES AT THE FOOT OF A CLIFF, *by Edgar Degas*

The above landscape, which is a part of the *Survey of Landscape Painting Exhibition* now on display at the San Francisco Museum of Art, is being shown here for the first time in America, through the courtesy of Durand-Ruel.

THE WEAVER OF NUENEN, *by Vincent Van Gogh*
Recently shown at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor.

The Gospel of Van Gogh

By GERTRUDE PARTINGTON ALBRIGHT

Van Gogh's bright galaxy at the Palace of the Legion was a breath-taking experience. Had the front door of our sober museum been left open by any chance, Armand? Certainly it looked as if the Pacific winds had blown in somehow—for a devil of a gale was roistering around inside.

The San Francisco painter has been fairly taken off his feet this time. Van Gogh himself, triumphantly alive, stands before us, all his fantastical tragedies swept away like dream stuff.

In this admirably arranged exhibit it was easy to follow the development of his genius. Its most obvious characteristic is, of course, the spectacular progression from darkness to light. Next comes the amazing evidence of the bewildering succession of painter influences that the Dutch artist deliberately and very humbly placed himself under. It is a long list. From each one, however, Van Gogh absorbed just and only the nourishment he most needed. That he remains, in face of this astounding gregariousness, one of our most individual painters, is certainly phenomenal. Lastly, and most significantly, we find man and his work at the heart of all Van Gogh's canvases.

The most personal side of Vincent finds expression in the beautiful drawings. Absolutely his own, these, as individual as handwriting. In trying to describe them words such as powerful, delicate, spontaneous, infinitely varied, come to mind. Magnificent is not too grand a word, either. And in these drawings, look you, what solid bedrock is there for the painting!

Van Gogh was born to paint as he was born to breathe. Nevertheless, for a curiously long time, black and white fully contented him. Desire for color came swiftly, however, when it did come, inevitably, passionately. He says, "I did not realize until I came to paint how much light there is in the darkness". "Drawing is like sowing, painting like reaping". And what a sumptuous harvest is yielded to us in these beautiful pictures! We see in them the quest after the Light—climaxed in a few short years with the highest light possible to the art of painting.

Vincent is like one of his own sunflowers; lying fallow in the dark earth until suddenly he hears the sun call. The will to break through asserts itself. What a prodigious struggling and pushing now begins! Growth, that ancient miracle, repeats itself, bearing the bright flower up, ever up towards the final brightness.

As to the many painter influences of Vincent's career, he quickly realized that oil-painting is a craft to be learned. The laborious knowledge gathered through the centuries, and ever being gathered, was a thing to reckon with. Vincent had the wisdom to reckon with it. We see first Chardin's influence in the "Straw Hat,"—a fluid, juicy stroke this, and already good painting. Mil-

let's sentimentality and the sugariness of Jules Breton were all good food for Vincent, as witness the "Potato Diggers."

In the "Peasant Girl's Head" we find Franz Hals, especially in the relations of its flesh tones. It is in Rembrandt, however, that we see the outstanding influence of the dark period. "The Weaver of Nuenen" ranks in nobility even alongside the older master. And what a fine balance is in its composition! The centre of the picture, and the top note of color, is the prophetic little landscape seen through the doorway. How very lovely it is, a gay little harbinger of those great landscapes that were to come later. It is in the figure of the weaver, however, that we see most clearly the bond between these two great Dutchmen. They both "loved much." "Love," Vincent tells us, "and you shall bring stones to life."

After this, Paris, with its line-up of brilliant and logical impressionists. Dear old Father Corot, however, gets in a lick ahead of them, with the little picture of "Montmartre"—a canvas vividly suggesting an early Corot. The luminous sky, which is not blue at all, but looks it, is very lovely. The "Cornfield" suggests, of c o u r s e, Monet, cleverly mimicking even the casual composition of this gay colorist. "The Cafe" suggests, likewise of course, Georges S e u r a t—a stripe of a more significant color, by your leave. It is strange, indeed, to see the wild Dutchman harnessing himself voluntarily to the meticulous scientific mosaic of this cool French classicist. Vincent, nevertheless, knew what he was about. The science of color became an integral part of his make-up, which he was thereafter able to command with an astonishing facility.

The list continues. Pissarro, that sane and wise old man, we find in the "Grasses". "Avenue des Tombes" is Gauguin's color: Burnt orange, gay background for the green tombs, some little figures, one in bright scarlet. Stone-blue trunks of trees, pilaster-like, stand boldly in the foreground.

Van Gogh's last source of sustenance is beautifully the old Orient. The flat noble areas were a delight to him. The still life, "Lemons, with Wine-Bottle," shows this very plainly. Fine spacing of different yellows,—deepest of these in the lemons themselves, p l a c e d in the exquisitely drawn basket of flesh pink—extraordinarily subtle in color—dominant note the olive green bottle. Very notably this picture is a precursor of his sunflowers.

The Dutchman now journeys south, to beautiful Provence, surely a portentous journey, for here Vincent Van Gogh finds himself. The elements alone become his masters. Even these he twists and bends, in fitting them to Art's different unison.

The self-portrait is of this period. It is delightfully the portrait of a landscape painter. The artist stands bareheaded to the sun, painting at his c a n v a s. The background is grey like the under side of a white cloud. The beard and lips of the man exist extraordinarily, poppy and carmine they are. Hair bristling with the wind, and of straw color. Eye-lids scarlet with glaring at the sun. The coat bright cobalt. The hand, beautifully placed under the palette, is neutral. Often this is so in Van Gogh's flesh tones. But the palette he holds in this hand—as gay as the flowering fields at Vincent's feet.

We come now to the third and last characteristic of this modern master; his gospel of man and man's work as subject matter. Van Gogh maintained that the contribution of Modern Art to the Great Tradition lay in this:

(1) The beauty and significance in art of the ordinary human being as he goes about his ordinary daily work,—working;

(2) The inseparability of the idea, man, from that which he is doing. (Just so, he would say, we cannot separate God from the Universe that he creates.) Everything that man uses is cherished, a pair of old boots (what a canvas that is!), a chair that he has sat on, a bed lain in; even the most remote landscapes become significant because we find in them cornfields that man has planted, olive trees that he has nurtured; a melancholy ravine exists because of two brightly-petticoated little women, bravely climbing over the rocks.

In Vincent's "Rain" the deliberate little raindrops occupy the front plane of the picture. In spite of all its delicate tonality this picture has marvellous carrying power. A nobly planned canvas, indeed.

The sun is bright and beautiful because it gives warmth to man. The stars at twilight, tremulous in their radiances of green and violet, tell him of the Great Spirit. In the night picture, the stars, brighter now, hang like suspended daisies in the *mille fleurs* of the darker sky, and symbolize for him the mystery of all living things.

"La Berceuse" rocks her cradle, and as she rocks, her grey eyes mirror the dreams that she is dreaming for the child, as all women dream. Her bright head, hair red, face of a curious ochre, comes powerfully even against the riotous cheap wall paper, which Vincent manipulates, somehow or other, into fine design. Her bodice, broad and big, is green, dark and opaque, whilst the apron is a light green, transparent as sea water. The hands rocking the cradle are very sensitively felt against this fine color. In the lower area of the canvas we see the foil for all this—a deep, strong crimson.

Across the way is "The Actor," acting, of course, for that is his business. The powerful diagonals of the head and shoulders are held in

THE CAFE, *by Vincent Van Gogh*
Recently shown at California Palace of the Legion of Honor.

place by the little horizontal line given by the collar. Absolutely convincing d r a w i n g this, Daumier-like in characterization. Add the strident color;—brilliant, pea-green background, yellow to dull red flesh, together with the bold black blue of the coat, and you have here a veritable *tour de force*.

When it comes to sunflowers superlatives well-nigh exhaust themselves. "Sunflowers are mine," says Vincent. There's not the shadow of a doubt about it, Vincent, they are.

This picture queens it in her royal robes of yellow, all the yellows, from buff to bronze to gold to primrose. In juxtaposition to these, the little patches of other colors—blue, brown-red and emerald, startle with their shining. After all, gold is the one perfect neutral. Compare with the "Sunflowers" the dark little "Bird Nests" of the e a r l y years,—one finds all the way from heaven to hell between them.

Our own Valley of the Moon might have been the country of the "Cornfield and Reaper," with hills boldly cut, against an evening sky of veiled yellow, yellow like that of a mariposa lily; the sun outlined, but incident only to its effect of light. Hills of amethyst, striped with green, melt into rose as they background the cornfield. This cornfield, of honey yellow, darker than the sky, is drawn with those powerful brush-strokes which give us the very marrow of the corn itself. The little figure of the reaper, that Vincent mistakenly calls Death, is reaping, not d e a t h,

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There will be no issue of the BULLETIN in July. The next number will be published in August.

Parilia Inspires Paris Ball

Echoes of San Francisco's own Parilia will reverberate through Paris this fall, it was learned recently. Lady Mendl (Elsie de Wolfe), who attended the ball in January as guest of Mrs. Nion Tucker, is planning a similar affair centered around the costumes designed for the pageant by Kenneth Hook.

The garments, it will be remembered, were worn by horses and warriors, and were seen immediately before the entrance of the King. Colors used were red, white and black. White horses' masks, red lips, black eyes and gay fluttering red manes composed the head-dresses. Dorothy Jenkinson, a student at the night school, executed the patterns.

The fact that each of these Parilia costumes was produced for one dollar or less makes the story of their reproduction especially interesting, for, to quote Kenneth Hook, "Lady Mendl was wearing an $800 Molyneux or something at the time, while mine was of rayon and Chinese silver tea paper. That is the great delight of our Parilia: to create effects for one dollar apiece that can knock even Elsie de Wolfe's eyes out."

Vincent, but life, the very bread of it. For this picture of yours gives us solemn and quiet assurance of immortality.

Surely, of all the fine exhibitions held at the Palace of the Legion of Honor this of Van Gogh's has been the most stimulating. Dr. Heil, may we at least extend our thanks to you?

Perhaps we could most fittingly close with Vincent's advice to his fellow artists,—how many, many times has he humbly taken theirs! "Love and you shall change your canvas to a flowering garden. Love a friend, anyone or anything, and I tell you you will be on the right road to learn more." And was it not from Theo that Vincent learned this secret?

These pictures of Van Gogh's, let us not forget, stand as a monument to Theo, the man who loved his brother.

Irving Stone Interviewed

A hurried chat that followed a broadcast and just preceded a lecture, a few brief questions and answers with an author who endeavored to be genial under circumstances that must have been most trying—such was my interview with Irving Stone, author of "Lust for Life", the popular biographical novel based on the life of Vincent Van Gogh.

"What first evoked your interest in Van Gogh," I asked. "Was it his painting or his story?"

"No, I do not think it was his painting," he answered honestly. "I was working very hard, you know, in New York—writing and searching for material—and this presented itself. Then began my trip through Europe."

"Tell us of some of the people you interviewed, Mr. Stone." (I had visions of Dr. Gachet's sympathetic words gracing the pages of our Bulletin.) But no, the author was "under contract" and he could not speak of these kindly persons.

"Did you meet any of the painters while in Paris? Did you have a chance to discuss Van Gogh's influence with them?"

"No," he answered, he "was concerned with the writing of a book and absorbed by the research it entailed".

"Did your publishers appreciate that Van Gogh's story would constitute a best-seller?"

"It was all I could do to find a publisher at all." He smiled. "Every major publishing house turned me down. The American public would not be concerned, they felt, with biographies of this kind.

"But the story of Van Gogh is magnificent," he continued. "I never feel that it was tragic. All that he endured was necessary for his ultimate expression. When he died he had said all that he had to say. What man could ask for more?"

The time was growing shorter and one question remained to trouble me. It was a question based on the author's synthesis of Van Gogh's life as it appeared in the title.

"Why," I wished to ask Mr. Stone, "did you call the book 'Lust for Life'? Was not Van Gogh's consuming love for Mankind and the Universe one and the same? Did he not express this most eloquently in both his letters and his paintings?"

But that question remained unanswered. An author, three months late on his "dead-line" for a new novel, aroused my sympathy.

It was too brief an interview!

The S. F. Museum of Art announces a lecture on "Landscape as Mood," by Dr. Alfred Neumeyer of Mills College, Tuesday afternoon, June 9, at 2:30.

Survey of Landscape Painting at San Francisco Museum of Art

By Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley

The *Survey of Landscape Painting Exhibition* at the San Francisco Museum of Art through June includes many examples of paintings illustrating important phases of that slowly developing love of nature which has resulted in our modern landscape. An Aelbert Bouts *Madonna and Child* (primitive Flemish) begins the movement. A Quentin Matsys *Landscape*, at the Dawn of the Renaissance, exemplifies a growing awareness of enveloping nature, but introduces figures for the sake of interest; a device used in the fine Claude Lorrain, the Gaspard Poussin, and even the seventeenth century Dutchmen.

The seventeenth century felt too keenly still the power of man and his increasing control of the forces of life and his dependence on reason to conceive of nature except as a setting and background for humanity. The eighteenth century went a step further and either reduced landscape to a conventional backdrop of foliage after the manner of Fragonard in his decorative painting, or to a dramatic environment reflecting in mood the action of the characters, as in Magnasco. Indeed, it was not till the end of the century that the English painters, Gainsborough, then notably Constable, Morland and a whole group of minor artists began to show a sensibility to nature as distinct from man. Gradually the human figures were dwarfed, then omitted, or were present only by accident, and the forms of nature become protagonists and assume a personality. With Constable the artist begins to delight in transcribing the reality of nature. The Barbizon painters, then the Impressionists, carry on the study.

The entire span of this development is illustrated in the exhibition, from the primitives through the nineteenth century. It includes an outstanding Claude Lorrain, various examples of the Dutch School, including a superb Everdingen, that is close to our modern feeling, a fine Constable, a comprehensive group of the Barbizon canvases and of the Impressionists' works.

A group of American nineteenth century painters, the naive American primitives and the Hudson River group, properly find a place here. Keith and Yelland and others of the California landscapists, whose contribution to the development of landscape painting deserves fuller recognition, form the background for notable work in this field carried on by California artists today.

New Members, San Francisco Art Association

Dr. Harry E. Alderson, Mrs. Wallace Alexander, Mrs. John Altman, Dr. Otto Barkan, Mrs. Otto Barkan, Mrs. Newton Bissinger, Mrs. Alice P. Blackburn, Mr. Louis Block, Mrs. Clare Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Camp, Mrs. Leo J. Clayburgh, Mrs. Charles W. Cobb, Mr. Guthrie Courvoisier, Mr. Gardner Dailey, Mrs. Gardner Dailey, Mrs. Lloyd Dinkelspiel, Mrs. Arthur Dunne, Mr. Joseph Dyer, Jr., Mrs. Victor Eisner, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Friedlander, Mrs. Moses Heller, Mrs. Vera R. Hyman, Mr. and Mrs. S. Orie Johnson, Mrs. Samuel Kahn, Mr. Victor Klinker, Mr. Leon Levy, Mrs. Ben Liebes, Mrs. Jesse W. Lilienthal, Jr., Mrs. Irma Livingston, Mr. William H. McCarthy, Mrs. R. P. McCullough, Mrs. Duncan McDuffie, Mr. Grover Magnin, Mr. Joseph A. Moore, Mrs. Nathan Moran, Mrs. Etta Morsehead, Mrs. Harold P. Nachtrieb, Mr. Newton Neustadter, Miss Florence Oppenheim, Mr. Milton Pflueger, Dr. Otto Pflueger, Mr. William Pflueger, Mrs. Bruce Porter, Mr. Atherton Richards, Mrs. Leon Roos, Leland S. Rosener, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Rosenshine, Mrs. Ludwig Rosenstein, Mrs. Milton H. Salz, Mrs. Albert Schwabacher, Mrs. Richard H. Shainwald, Mr. George D. Smith, Mrs. Jane Lawler Stern, Mr. William Stevenson, Mr. J. L. Stuart, Mr. and Mrs. John Threlkeld, Jr., Mrs. Elizabeth Tooley, Miss Ruth A. Turner, Mr. Etheredge Walker, Mr. William S. Wobber, Jr., Mrs. William Wallace Woods, Mr. Samuel I. Wormser, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Young, Jr., Mrs. A. L. Lengfeld.

ASSOCIATE ARTIST MEMBERS

Peter Abenheim, Mr. Ansel E. Adams, Miss Beth Armstrong, Miss Elizabeth Banning, Mrs. Milvia Boak, Mrs. Constance B. Chandler, Mr. David P. Chun, Mr. Ralph Wendell Clifford, Mrs. Doris Day, Mr. Christian De Marta, Mrs. Helen Hughes Dulany, Mrs. Gertrude Hanna Erickson, Mrs. Hans Klussman, Mrs. Dorothy Wright Liebes, Miss Elizabeth Love, Miss Elizabeth McDermott, Mr. George Oppen, Mr. Donald Pitt, Mrs. Silas Sinton, Mrs. Stanley Sinton, Jr., Mrs. E. T. Spencer, Mr. Charles Howard Voorhies, Mrs. Mary Walser, Miss Lucille Wollenberg, Mr. William Wilson Wurster, Mrs. Belle McMurtry Young.

ACTIVE ARTIST MEMBERS

Mrs. Jane Berlandina Howard, Miss Vera Bernhard, Mr. William L. Gerstle, Miss Edith Hamlin, Mr. Merlin Hardy, Mr. Paul Hunt, Miss Doris Miller Johnson, Mr. Thomas Laman, Miss Caroline Martin, Mr. Richard E. O'Hanlon, Miss Ann Rice, Mr. Zygmund Sazevich, Miss Claire von Falkenstein, Mrs. Emilie W. Winn.

Patio of California School of Fine Arts, showing display of students' work.

Summer Session to Open

The California School of Fine Arts closed its 1935-36 Regular Session on Friday afternoon, May 15th, with the annual reception and preview of students' work. Over two thousand people enjoyed the colorful decorations of the beautiful patio and the extensive exhibition that represented all departments of the school.

For the Summer Session of this year (June 22nd to August 1st) the feature of special interest will be the classes in figure drawing and painting under Mr. Maurice Sterne. Many students found inspiration through Mr. Sterne's teaching during the past year and these Summer courses will provide a splendid opportunity for those who were not able to attend the Regular Session.

Other courses will include elementary and life drawing, still life and landscape painting, design, commercial art, lettering, lithography, and lectures on the History of Art and Anatomy. The Night School and Saturday classes will reopen with the Summer Session.

Helen Phillips Wins Phelan Scholarship

Outstanding honor of the school year, the James D. Phelan Traveling Scholarship of $2,000, has been awarded to Helen Phillips, young sculptor, and student at the California School of Fine Arts for the past three and one-half years.

Although scarcely beyond her student years, Helen Phillips manifests a maturity in her sculpture that is most unusual. Her stone figure, "Young Woman," won the San Francisco Museum Purchase Prize at the Art Association's 56th Annual in January.

Provision for the traveling scholarship was made possible under terms of the bequest left the San Francisco Art Association by the late Senator James D. Phelan.

The following Scholarships were given at the close of the school year:

ANNE BREMER MEMORIAL FUND—William Campbell, Jack Wilkinson.
ANGUS GORDON BOGGS—Herbert Krumel.
VIRGIL WILLIAMS—Robert Sterling.
JUNIOR LEAGUE—Dorothy Halpin.
JAMES D. PHELAN—Lee Baker, Elinor Bates, Ardath Coldwell, Charlotte Holden, Helen Rognas, Carl George, Wm. Zentner.

L. R.

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California School of Fine Arts

The following Awards were given at the close of the school year, May 15th, 1936:

Anne Bremer Memorial Fund Awards

Marjorie Eakin, Clifford Spooner, William Childers, Edwin Cadogan, Helen Purdy, Tanya Boratynski.

I. N. Walter Sculpture Prize

Ardath Coldwell.

High School Scholarships

Emil Edgren.....Mission High, San Francisco
Walter Dale.....San Rafael Union High
Beverly Leslie.....Oakland High

Honorable Mentions

Dan Romano.....Mission High, San Francisco
Eva Vidar Jensen.....Galileo High, San Francisco
Thomas Austin White.....South San Francisco High

AWARDS OF MERIT

Life Drawing

Milvia Boak, Emile Cero, James Hastings, Robert Jones, William Zentner, Sally Wheeler, Jack Foote, Aileen Poole, Dora Arnold, Tanya Boratynski, Edna Drescher, John Fredericks, Lee Baker, Elinor Bates, William Childers, Charles Dornbach, Marjorie Eakin, Wilbur C. Gibson, Charlotte Holden, Royden Martin, Harriet McAfee, Norman Todhunter, Rose Weniger, Galena Dotsenko, Louis Kitowski, Edward Lehto, Fenton Powers, Mary Scardigno, Mary Louise Carpenter, Charles Voorhies.

Elementary Drawing

Kathryn Bulger, Paul Clouette, Natalie Savage, Ralph Snider, Norman Todhunter.

Portrait Painting

Edward Best, Edwin Cadogan, Ardath Coldwell, Wilbur Gibson, Bernice Irwin, Marinora Wilson.

Color Construction

Robert Clark, Jean De Longpre, Jack Foote, Jane Hopper, Harriet McAfee, Louise Roesbery.

Landscape Painting

Una McCann.

Sculpture

Tanya Boratynski, Ardath Coldwell, Carl George, Helen Phillips.

Interior Rendering

Leroy Cleal, Audrey Wehr.

Life Painting

Herbert Krumel, Robert Sterling, Harold Warren, Marjorie Eakin, Helen Dunham, Dorothy Halpin, Jack Wilkinson.

Still Life Painting

Milvia Boak, Kathryn Bulger, Alice Dietrich, Charlotte Holden, Nelda Johnston, Herbert Krumel, Gloria Rosenthal, Helen Rognas, Mary Slate, Sally Wheeler, William Zentner.

Fresco

William Campbell.

Design and Color

Robert Bradbury, Kathryn Bulger, Lyda Heard, Helen Rognas, Clifford Spooner.

Ceramics

Ruth Adams, Albert Baker, John Magnani, Esther Rosen, Annabel Wilson.

Textiles

Elise Carrington, Isabel Davis, Marie Gibeau, Helen Purdy, Mary D. Tatum, Sally Wheeler.

Costume Design

Patricia White.

Illustration

Stanley Galli, Lloyd Wulf.

Saturday Painting Class

Marsh Bohr, Myrle Doub, Eva Jensen, Shizue Tamura.

Lithography

Jack Wilkinson, Lloyd Wulf.

Etching

Dora Arnold.

Commercial Art

Emile Cero, Elvira Rice, Jeanette Young.

Space Division

Elinor Bates.

Saturday Children's Classes

Isabel Parker, Grace Ridgway, Helen Leopold, Thornton Craig, Jacob Ehlrich, Rosalie Heald, Alfred Nielsen, Bobby Rosenbaum, Benny Rubinsky.